

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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TAGS: SHUM, RP

SUBJECT: MARCOS JUNE 3 MEETING WITH FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS: HUMAN
RIGHTS, HERRERA CASE AND MILITARY COURT PHASE OUT

REF: (A) MANILA 8725; (B) MANILA 8647

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PRESIDENT MARCOS JUNE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON
HERRERA CASE AND PHASING OUT OF MILITARY COURTS:

Q: WHAT EXTENT HAVE YOU BEEN INFLUENCED IN THE HERRERA CASE BY
THE US EMBASSY INTERVENTION?

A: THE INVESTIGATION WAS CONDUCTED BY THE MILITARY IN THE
HERRERA CASE -- THE GERILLA CASE -- WERE INITIATED BEFORE THE
US EMBASSY SHOWED INTEREST IN THE CASE. SO MUCH SO THAT THERE
WERE ALREADY MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS CONDUCTED BEFORE THE INTERVICTION
BY THE US EMBASSY. INCIDENTALLY, I INVITED THE US EMBASSY
TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OF MRS.
HERRERA SOME TIME IN APRIL. IRRESPECTIVE OF THE INTERVENTION
OF THE US EMBASSY OR ANY OTHER GROUP, THE PLAN WAS TO CONDUCT
AN INVESTIGATION, HAVE MRS. HERRERA PINPOINT IN A LINEUP
THOSE WHOM SHE CHARGED WITH HAVING INFLECTED PHYSICAL HARM
WHILE INVESTIGATING HER. AND THIS THEY DID. AT THE
FIRST LINEUP SHE WAS ABLE TO IDENTIFY ONLY ONE OFFICER,
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WHICH WAS THE REASON WHY ONLY ONE OFFICER WAS ARRESTED.
AT THE BEGINNING. NOW THREE MORE, I UNDERSTAND, ARE
INCLUDED IN THESE CHARGES.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHY THE US TOOK SUCH AN INTEREST
IN THE CASE?

A: I WOULD THINK THAT IT WAS BECAUSE LETTERS WERE SENT TO EVERYBODY IN THE US GOVERNMENT BY INTERESTED PARTIES. AS LETTERS WERE SENT TO ME.

Q: I GO BACK TO THE GERILLA AFFAIR. THERE HAS BEEN OPINION IN SOME QUARTERS THAT THE INTEREST SHOWN BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN THE GERILLA AFFAIR WAS MORE INTERFERENCE IN PHILIPPINE AFFAIRS. WHAT CAN YOU SAY ABOUT THAT, SIR?

A: WELL, IF THAT'S INTERFERENCE, IT'S THE KIND OF INTERFERENCE WE WOULD LIKE THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN. WE HAVE NO COMMENT. BECAUSE WE HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE EBD INTERFERENCE ON MATTERS THAT ARE OPENLY AND FRANKLY AN EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY, THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE. WE AGREE WITH PRESIDENT CARTER THAT HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOT BOUND WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF COUNTRIES. THE MOMENT YOU ADHERE TO THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS -- I THINK THAT HE IS CORRECT -- THAT HE SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OTHER COUNTRIES, BUT NOT EXACTLY TO THE POINT OF DICTATING EXACTLY HOW THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE RUN. HUMAN DIGNITY HAS NO BOUNDARY. I PERSONALLY FEEL THAT WAY AND THAT IS WHY I IMMEDIATELY INVITED MINISTER LEE STALL TO GO AND MEET THE PRISONER HIMSELF OR TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE, AND HE SENT TWO REPRESENTATIVES. I FEEL THAT THIS IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN COOPERATE TO MAINTAIN THE DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL. I AGREE THAT IT BORDERS ON WHAT COULD BE INTERVENTION BUT IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT WE ARE NOT (INAUDIBLE) AND WE WOULD LIKE TO HELP WITH THE GENERAL EFFORT NOT ONLY IN THE PHILIPPINES BUT ALL OVER. WE WOULD THINK THAT EVERY

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GOVERNMENT WOULD OPEN ITSELF UP TO SCRUTINY AS TO ITS CONDUCT IN RELATION TO ITS PRISONERS. A FAIR, JUST APPRAISAL OF THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS WE WELCOME -- I PERSONALLY WELCOME.

Q: I UNDERSTAND YOU TO SAY THAT YOU'RE GOING TO PHASE OUT THE MILITARY COURTS, THE MILITARY TRAILS, AND YOU ARE GOING TO ORDER THE REMAINING DETAINEES TO BE TRIED BY THE CIVIL COURTS. THE REPORTS THAT I HAVE HEARD ARE THAT THE CIVIL COURTS ARE JAMMED. HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO FACILITATE THE TRAILS OF THESE PEOPLE IF YOU PUT THE BURDEN ON THE CIVIL COURTS?

A: WELL, WE WILL JUST HAVE TO WORK OUT AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COURTS OR WE WILL HAVE TO TASK THE SUPREME COURT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EFFORT TO ACCELERATE THESE CASES.

Q: HAVE YOU BEEN SATISFIED WITH THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE MILITARY COURTS HAVE TAKEN CARE OF THESE CASES?

A: NO.
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